



Highway 101 Greenbrae Corridor Improvement Project

Information Open House & Public Meeting

October 20, 2005

Transportation Authority of Marin

www.tam.ca.gov

Public Meeting / Comment Summary

*prepared for the Transportation Authority of Marin
by CirclePoint*

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TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OF MARIN HIGHWAY 101 GREENBRAE CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

INFORMATIONAL OPEN HOUSE AND PUBLIC MEETING – COMMENT SUMMARY OCTOBER 20, 2005

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TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OF MARIN HIGHWAY 101 GREENBRAE CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will address inadequate design of the existing roadway by implementing improvements to the Greenbrae Corridor from the Tamalpais Drive overcrossing in Corte Madera to the Greenbrae Interchange at Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. The congestion in this corridor is listed as the 8th worst in the Bay Area. Some of the problems within this corridor are: 1) the existing roadway design and spacing between interchanges does not meet current California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) freeway design standards, 2) congestion on Highway 101 then creates additional traffic on local streets in Corte Madera and Larkspur, 3) accidents are higher than the average for a similar roadway because of the poor merging patterns, and 4) anticipated future traffic growth will further exacerbate the existing problems.

In preliminary studies conducted on the Greenbrae Corridor, seven different conceptual options were developed to address design deficiencies, traffic congestion, and safety issues within this corridor. The Town of Corte Madera and City of Larkspur held public hearings in 2003 and expressed a preference for Option #4 (Wornum Drive Interchange) with modifications. The proposed project will:

- Improve access to and from Highway 101
- Contribute to better operation and traffic flow
- Use a multi-modal approach to address transportation improvements
- Reduce weaving and merging conflicts on the highway
- Address circulation issues on local roads

The Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), in cooperation with Caltrans, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), County of Marin, Town of Corte Madera, the City of Larkspur, and the Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District, is in the initial phase of studies to evaluate options to address issues in the project area.

This project is sponsored by the Transportation Authority of Marin in cooperation with Caltrans, and will be funded by Regional Measure 2, a \$1.00 increase in bridge tolls on the Richmond/San Rafael Bridge, which was approved by voters in 2004.

PURPOSE OF OUTREACH PROCESS

The Outreach Process for this project was designed to encourage broad community input. TAM is at the beginning of the studies to evaluate options to address issues in the Highway 101 Greenbrae Corridor. TAM planned this initial public outreach meeting to provide community members with an opportunity to ask questions, raise issues and make comments about what to address in the studies. Future public meetings will provide more opportunities for comments and questions.

NOTIFICATION

TAM sent meeting notification letters to community members that have indicated an interest in the project, as well as elected officials in the project area (*see Appendix A*). A general letter also was mailed to a broad list of community members provided by Corte Madera and the County of Marin (*see Appendix A*). These letters collectively were mailed to over 4,000 recipients. Both letters provided basic project information, a brief explanation of the public outreach process and encouraged recipients to attend the Open House / Public Meeting.

A newspaper advertisement was placed in the Marin Independent Journal on October 11th and October 18th and the Twin Cities Times on October 11th (*see Appendix B*). TAM also distributed a press release to local newspaper, radio and TV outlets (*see Appendix B*).

All meeting information was posted on the TAM website. TAM also provided an electronic copy of the notification materials to the City of Larkspur and the Town of Corte Madera to post on their websites. The Town of Corte Madera also included an article in their September 2005 newsletter encouraging Corte Madera residents to be involved (*see Appendix B*).

INFORMATIONAL OPEN HOUSE AND PUBLIC MEETING

The Transportation Authority of Marin organized an Informational Open House and Public Meeting that was held on Thursday, October 20, 2005. The Open House/Meeting was held in Corte Madera at the Corte Madera Recreation Center. Over 140 community members, elected officials and other interested parties attended. *See Appendix C for sign-in sheets.*

The information open house provided an opportunity for participants to view exhibit boards with project information (*See Appendix D*). TAM representatives were available to answer any questions. The open house was followed by a brief presentation. The presentation began with an introduction by Steve Kinsey, TAM Chairman, and Dianne Steinhauer, TAM Executive Director. Participants then heard a review of the study information including the study area and scope, the preliminary options and the study schedule. Following the presentation, the meeting was opened up to comments and questions from participants.

At the meeting, participants were provided with materials including an agenda, open house program, presentation slides, comment card, and copies of the March 2003 Larkspur and Corte Madera resolutions indicating their preference for Option 4 with modifications. *See Appendix D for all meeting materials.*

KEY ISSUES & CONCERNS

Meeting participants had an opportunity to provide comments at the meeting as well as to submit written comments at their convenience. Many participants provided verbal comments during the meeting and over 18 written public comments were submitted (*see Appendix E*). Below is summary of the issues heard at the meeting and written comments. Comments have been separated into general topic areas in order to group similar ideas. This summary is not a transcript of the comments received; instead it summarizes the major issues and concerns of participants.

Study Scope

Many participants recognized that there are issues and problems in this corridor and provided suggestions to include in the evaluation of the corridor and options to address the problems. They did comment that

they would like to see a more refined definition of the problem. Many participants noted a number of other studies and projects that are currently in process in Marin and urged that this study be conducted in coordination with those related studies and projects. Participants also suggested expanding the scope of the project area south to include the Tiburon/Mill Valley exits and to expand the studies east and west to broaden the corridor.

Meeting participants also provided a variety of suggestions relating to the information they want to see included in studies and information they want to see the studies provide. They want the studies to include flooding and earthquake studies, specifically in the area along Tamal Vista Boulevard because the area is at or below sea level in some areas and built on fill. Participants also suggested that flooding studies should address the Lucky Drive area, which has chronic flooding issues.

Participants noted the recent shift in traffic in the corridor with the detours related to the work on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. They suggested including an in-depth study to understand the traffic patterns of those using the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. Participants also noted that the studies need to include any assumptions made about the San Quentin area because if the facility is to close in the future, there will be traffic impacts to include in planning efforts.

Participants also wanted to know what alternatives would be included in the studies and if there would be opportunities to develop additional alternatives. Early in the process, participants want to see a 3-dimensional model of the project area and the options in order to better visualize the operation and function.

Preliminary Options

Participants provided comments specific to the Preliminary Options developed in the Interim Planning Report. Some participants noted potential conflicts with some suggested routes, specifically that the Wornum extension would conflict with a planned bike path along the existing railroad right-of-way. Others suggested that at least one of the alternatives should include future rail service. Some participants also felt that Option 4 would not adequately address congestion issues on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

Access

On/Off-Ramps

Many participants were concerned about congestion issues at Sir Francis Drake at Highway 101 and at the ferry terminal. Many others were concerned that the proposed closing of the Lucky Drive and Madera Boulevard exits would impact residents and businesses dependent upon those access points and may result in more congestion on the local street network and Highway 101. It was also mentioned that there ought to be studies completed to improve the operation of the Tamalpais Drive interchange including adding a new lane to the over-crossing. One participant suggested prohibiting the flow of traffic from Lucky Drive to northbound Highway 101 as a more cost effective way to address congestion.

Circulation on Local Roads

In regards to local circulation, one participant suggested looking at studies completed by San Diego and San Bernadino. To address local circulation, another participant suggested connecting Redwood Highway with Sir Francis Drake Boulevard so local traffic would not need to use the highway. Many participants want to see this project address congestion issues along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. It was suggested to improve the traffic signal timing at the Ferry Terminal and to consider the use of signal priority for transit

buses. Many were also concerned about the ability of Tamal Vista and Madera Boulevard to handle any increase in traffic.

Participants also want to see an alternative that would address the traffic from Redwood High School, which includes many new drivers.

Multi-modal Access

Many participants expressed concern that this area needs to be accessible to bicyclists and pedestrians noting that communities of Corte Madera and Larkspur need to have easy and safe access from their downtown areas to the ferry terminal no matter how they are transporting themselves. Participants expressed the desire to preserve the railroad right-of-way for rail and a multi-use pathway preferring not to extend Wornum Drive. Some participants commented that Tamalpais Drive could use bike lanes to better manage the interaction between bicycles and automobiles.

Participants also pointed out that other modes of transportation need to be considered including trains and buses.

Safety

Many participants expressed concern for the safety issues related to interactions between pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles and others. Many noted that this project must include safe and upgraded facilities to serve all members of the community including the students that use the corridor facilities to walk, bike and drive to school. Class 1 Bicycle/ Pedestrian facilities are preferred.

Project Cost

Participants were concerned that the cost of the project was too high and recommended that less costly alternatives be explored with any savings applied toward additional projects. Some participants encouraged an incremental approach to capital improvements

Impact Analysis

Participants were concerned about the environmental impacts related to the extension of Wornum Drive into the marshland area. They were also concerned that any additional paving related to this project would be covering wetland areas.

Many participants voiced concern about potential noise impacts, noting that because of the topography in the area, impacts go beyond the direct highway corridor. They asked if impacts analysis would include an evaluation of reflective noise and expressed a desire to consider noise-absorbing materials. Participants also requested that the evaluation also include detailed information about any sound walls that would be used and how they would work

Participants were also concerned about visual impacts noting that any new structures need to blend in with the existing environment.

Study Schedule

Some participants felt that the timeline for this project was too long and that the studies completed now would be invalid by the time construction begins. They felt the project should be enveloped into a much longer term, broader study process. Other participants wanted to know the specific schedule for scoping meetings during the environmental evaluation.

Community Involvement

Participants wanted to hear if the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) discussed earlier in the project would form and who would be part of the committee. The CAC should include representatives from the community and special interest groups.

Other Information

Participants wanted more information about the Transportation Authority of Marin, specifically, where it's authority comes from and how the TAM Board of Commissioners is formed.

Another participant wanted to know what public notification went out regarding Larkspur/Corte Madera resolutions that identified Option 4 with modifications as their preferred option.

NEXT STEPS

TAM will initiate the environmental studies early in 2006. The studies will refine the project purpose and need and examine all of the options that meet those project needs. Notification will go out to all participants and other community members as project materials become available and when scoping meetings are set. A public notice will also be placed in the local newspapers to inform the community of the upcoming meetings and to encourage maximum public input through the process.